Jeffrey Epstein's Private Calendar: CIA Director William Burns, Goldm...

Khadeeja Safdar

Epstein's Private Calendar Reveals Prominent Names, Including CIA Chief, Goldman's Top Lawyer

Schedules and emails detail meetings in the years after he was a convicted sex offender; visitors cite his wealth and connections

April 30, 2023 7:59 am ET .

.

The nation's spy chief, a longtime college president and top women in finance. The circle of people who associated with Jeffrey Epstein years after he was a convicted sex offender is wider than previously reported, according to a trove of documents that include his schedules.

William Burns, director of the Central Intelligence Agency since 2021, had three meetings scheduled with Epstein in 2014, when he was deputy secretary of state, the documents show. They first met in Washington and then Mr. Burns visited Epstein's townhouse in Manhattan.

Kathryn Ruemmler, a White House counsel under President Barack Obama, had dozens of meetings with Epstein in the years after her White House service and before she became a top lawyer at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. in 2020. He also planned for her to join a 2015 trip to Paris and a 2017 visit to Epstein's private island in the Caribbean.

Leon Botstein, the president of Bard College, invited Epstein, who brought a group of young female guests, to the campus. Noam Chomsky, a professor, author and political activist, was scheduled to fly with Epstein to have dinner at Epstein's Manhattan townhouse in 2015.

None of their names appear in Epstein's now-public "black book" of contacts or in the public flight logs of passengers who traveled on his private jet. The documents show that Epstein arranged multiple meetings with each of them after he had served jail time in 2008 for a sex crime involving a teenage girl and was registered as a sex offender. The documents, which include thousands of pages of emails and schedules from 2013 to 2017, haven't been previously reported.

The documents don't reveal the purpose of most of the meetings. The Wall Street Journal couldn't verify whether every scheduled meeting took place.

Most of those people told the Journal they visited Epstein for reasons related to his wealth and connections. Several said they thought he had served his time and had rehabilitated himself. Mr. Botstein said he was trying to get Epstein to donate to his school. Mr. Chomsky said he and Epstein discussed political and academic topics.

CIA director William Burns, pictured in center at a Senate hearing in March, met in 2014 with Epstein in Washington and later visited Epstein's townhouse in Manhattan.

Photo: Al Drago/Bloomberg News

.

Mr. Burns met with Epstein about a decade ago as he was preparing to leave government service, said CIA spokeswoman Tammy Kupperman Thorp. "The director did not know anything about him, other than that he was introduced as an expert in the financial services sector and offered general advice on transition to the private sector," she said. "They had no relationship."

Ms. Ruemmler had a professional relationship with Epstein in connection with her role at law firm Latham & Watkins LLP and didn't travel with him, a Goldman Sachs spokesman said. Epstein introduced her to potential legal clients, such as Microsoft Corp. co-founder Bill Gates,

the spokesman said. "I regret ever knowing Jeffrey Epstein," Ms. Ruemmler said.

A spokeswoman for Latham & Watkins said Epstein wasn't a client of the firm.

In 2006, Epstein was publicly accused of sexually abusing girls in Florida who were as young as 14

years old. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and police investigated, and Epstein reached a deal with prosecutors in 2008. He avoided federal charges and pleaded guilty to soliciting and procuring a minor for prostitution. He registered as a sex offender and served about 13 months in a work-release program.

A photo taken in Epstein's townhouse when authorities entered in 2019, later introduced as evidence in court.

Photo: SDNY

.

In 2015, Virginia Giuffre publicly accused Epstein of sexually abusing and trafficking her when she was a teen and forcing her to have sex with influential people, including Prince Andrew. Prince Andrew has denied the allegations and last year settled a sex-abuse lawsuit by Ms. Giuffre.

Despite the negative press, Epstein's days were filled from morning to night with meetings with prominent people, the documents show. There were dinners at New York restaurants, meetings at luxury hotels and gatherings in the offices of prominent law firms. Many appointments were held at Epstein's townhouse in Manhattan.

Prosecutors alleged in 2019 that the townhouse is where Epstein sexually abused female victims for

years, many underage, and that he paid some of them to recruit their friends to engage in sexual activity.

After the Miami Herald reported that dozens of women said they were abused, prosecutors charged Epstein in 2019 with a sex trafficking conspiracy. He died that year in a New York jail while awaiting trial in what the city's medical examiner said was a suicide.

Mr. Burns, 67 years old, a career diplomat and former ambassador to Russia, had meetings with Epstein in 2014 when Mr. Burns was deputy secretary of state.

A lunch was planned that August at the office of law firm Steptoe & Johnson in Washington. Epstein scheduled two evening appointments that September with Mr. Burns at his townhouse, the documents show. After one of the scheduled meetings, Epstein planned for his driver to take Mr. Burns to the airport.

Mr. Burns recalls being introduced in Washington by a mutual friend, and meeting Epstein once briefly in New York, said Ms. Thorp. "The director does not recall any further contact, including receiving a ride to the airport," she said.

The following month, October 2014, Mr. Burns stepped down from his role at the State Department to serve as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think tank. He ran the Carnegie Endowment until he was nominated in early 2021 by President Biden to serve as CIA director.

The documents show that Epstein appeared to know some of his guests well. He asked for avocado sushi rolls to be on hand when meeting with Ms. Ruemmler, according to the documents. He visited apartments she was considering buying. In October 2014, Epstein knew her travel plans and told an assistant to look into her flight. "See if there is a first class seat," he wrote, "if so upgrade her."

Kathryn Ruemmler had dozens of meetings with Epstein in the years after her White House service and before she became a top lawyer at Goldman Sachs.

Photo: William B. Plowman/NBCUniversal/Getty Images

.

In 2014, Epstein called Ms. Ruemmler within weeks of her leaving the Obama White House. Epstein planned a lunch in August 2014 at his townhouse, followed by a series of meetings to introduce her to a wider circle of his acquaintances.

Ms. Ruemmler first met Epstein after he called her to ask if she would be interested in representing Mr. Gates and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Goldman Sachs spokesman said.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Gates said Epstein never worked for Mr. Gates, misrepresented their relationship, and that Mr. Gates regrets ever meeting with him.

Epstein and his staff discussed whether Ms. Ruemmler, now 52, would be uncomfortable with the presence of young women who worked as assistants and staffers at the townhouse, the documents show. Women emailed Epstein on two occasions to ask if they should avoid the home while Ms. Ruemmler was there. Epstein told one of the women he didn't want her around, and another that it wasn't a problem, the documents show.

Ms. Ruemmler didn't see anything that would lead her to be concerned at the townhouse and didn't express any concern, the Goldman spokesman said.

Several people who visited Epstein during this time period said they noticed young women at his townhouse. One of the visitors, Helen Fisher, an anthropologist who studies romantic love and attachment, had lunch with Epstein in January 2016 to discuss her work.

Dr. Fisher said that after the lunch, Epstein invited her to speak with his staff. "And then, in filed, I would say, six young women," she said. "All of them good looking. All of them young."

Dr. Fisher said Epstein never funded her work, they weren't friends and they didn't stay in touch. "I didn't have anything to do with Jeffrey Epstein," she said. "But I remembered it because of his spectacular house and because of the six young women."

Epstein's former residence on a private island in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Photo: Emily Michot/TNS/Zuma Press

.

Over the next few years, Ms. Ruemmler, then a partner specializing in white-collar defense at Latham & Watkins, had more than three dozen appointments with Epstein, including for lunches and dinners.

"In the normal course, Epstein also invited her to meetings and social gatherings, introduced her to other business contacts and made referrals," the Goldman spokesman said. "It was the same kinds of contacts and engagements she had with other contacts and clients."

In 2015, she was scheduled to fly with Epstein to Paris and in 2017 he planned to stop in St. Lucia to take her to his island home in the U.S. Virgin Islands for the day, according to the documents.

Ms. Ruemmler never visited his island and "never accepted an invitation or an opportunity to fly with Jeffrey Epstein anywhere," the Goldman spokesman said.

In addition to her current role as general counsel at Goldman Sachs, Ms. Ruemmler is co-chair of its reputational risk committee, which monitors business and client decisions for potential damage to the bank's image.

Epstein also connected Ms. Ruemmler with Ariane de Rothschild, who is now chief executive of the Swiss private bank Edmond de Rothschild Group. The bank hired Ms. Ruemmler's law firm, Latham & Watkins, after the introduction to help with U.S. regulatory matters, according to the bank and the Goldman spokesman.

Mrs. de Rothschild, who married into the famous banking family, had more than a dozen meetings with Epstein. He sought her help with staffing and furnishings as well as discussed business deals with her, according to the documents.

Ariane de Rothschild, the head of a Swiss private bank, negotiated a $25 million contract with Epstein in 2015, the documents show.

Photo: Simon Dawson/Bloomberg News

.

In September 2013, Epstein asked Mrs. de Rothschild in an email for help finding a new assistant, "female...multilingual, organized."

"I'll ask around," Mrs. de Rothschild emailed back.

She bought nearly $1 million worth of auction items on Epstein's behalf in 2014 and 2015, the documents show.

Mrs. de Rothschild was named chairwoman of the bank in January 2015. That October, she and Epstein negotiated a $25 million contract for Epstein's Southern Trust Co. to provide "risk analysis and the application and use of certain algorithms" for the bank, according to a proposal reviewed by the Journal.

In 2019, after Epstein was arrested, the bank said that Mrs. de Rothschild never met with Epstein and it had no business links with him.

The bank acknowledged to the Journal that its earlier statement wasn't accurate. It said Mrs. de Rothschild met with Epstein as part of her normal duties at the bank between 2013 and 2019, and Epstein introduced the bank to U.S. finance leaders, recommended law firms and provided tax and risk consulting.

"In parallel to that, Epstein solicited her personally on a couple occasions for advice and services on estate management," the bank said.

Mrs. de Rothschild had no knowledge of any legal proceedings against Epstein and "was similarly unaware of any questions regarding his personal conduct," the bank said. After later learning of his behavior, the bank said, "she feels for and supports the victims."

One of Epstein's scheduled meetings with Mrs. de Rothschild, in January 2014, included another of his regular guests: Joshua Cooper Ramo, then co-chief executive of Henry Kissinger's corporate consulting firm.

Joshua Cooper Ramo had more than a dozen meetings scheduled with Epstein.

Photo: Imagine China/Reuters

.

Epstein scheduled more than a dozen meetings from 2013 to 2017 with Mr. Ramo, who at the time served on the boards of Starbucks Corp. and FedEx Corp. , the documents show. Epstein had special snacks on hand because he believed Mr. Ramo was vegetarian, the documents indicate.

Many of Mr. Ramo's appointments with Epstein were in the evenings, typically after 5 p.m., at the townhouse. Mr. Ramo also was invited to a breakfast at the townhouse in September 2013 with former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, another regular guest, the documents show.

Mr. Ramo, who still sits on the board of FedEx and recently stepped down from the Starbucks board,

didn't respond to requests for comment. A spokeswoman for Mr. Kissinger said he wasn't aware that Mr. Ramo was meeting with Epstein.

Mr. Barak also met Epstein in 2015 with Mr. Chomsky, now 94, a linguistics professor and political activist who has been critical of capitalism and U.S. foreign policy.

Mr. Chomsky said Epstein arranged the meeting with Mr. Barak for them to discuss "Israel's policies with regard to Palestinian issues and the international arena."

Mr. Barak said he often met with Epstein on trips to New York and was introduced to people such as Mr. Ramo and Mr. Chomsky to discuss geopolitics or other topics. "He often brought other interesting persons, from art or culture, law or science, finance, diplomacy or philanthropy," Mr. Barak said.

Epstein arranged several meetings in 2015 and 2016 with Mr. Chomsky, while he was a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

When asked about his relationship with Epstein, Mr. Chomsky replied in an email: "First response is that it is none of your business. Or anyone's. Second is that I knew him and we met occasionally."

In March 2015, Epstein scheduled a gathering with Mr. Chomsky and Harvard University professor Martin Nowak and other academics, according to the documents. Mr. Chomsky said they had several meetings at Mr. Nowak's research institute to discuss neuroscience and other topics.

Two months later, Epstein planned to fly with Mr. Chomsky and his wife to have dinner with them and movie director Woody Allen and his wife, Soon-Yi Previn, the documents show.

"If there was a flight, which I doubt, it would have been from Boston to New York, 30 minutes," Mr. Chomsky said. "I'm unaware of the principle that requires that I inform you about an evening spent with a great artist."

Epstein donated at least $850,000 to MIT between 2002 and 2017, and more than $9.1 million to Harvard from 1998 to 2008, the schools have said. In 2021, Harvard said it was sanctioning Mr. Nowak for violating university policies in his dealings with Epstein, and was shutting a research center he ran that Epstein had funded. MIT said it was inappropriate to accept Epstein's gifts, and that it later donated $850,000 to nonprofits supporting survivors of sexual abuse.

In a 2020 interview with the "dunc tank" podcast, Mr. Chomsky said that people he considered worse than Epstein had donated to MIT. He didn't mention any of his meetings with Epstein.

Noam Chomsky, a professor and political activist, said he discussed political and academic topics when meeting with Epstein.

Photo: Alejandro Acosta/Agencia EL UNIVERSAL/Zuma Press

.

Mr. Chomsky told the Journal that at the time of his meetings "what was known about Jeffrey Epstein was that he had been convicted of a crime and had served his sentence. According to U.S. laws and norms, that yields a clean slate."

MIT said lawyers investigating its ties to Epstein didn't find that Mr. Chomsky met with Epstein on its campus or received funding from him. Harvard declined to comment beyond the report it published on its Epstein ties in 2020. Mr. Nowak has said he regretted his role in fostering a connection between Epstein and Harvard. He didn't respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Botstein, 76, president of Bard College since 1975, had about two dozen meetings scheduled with Epstein over about four years, which were mostly visits to the townhouse.

"I was an unsuccessful fundraiser and actually the object of a little bit of sadism on his part in dangling philanthropic support," said Mr. Botstein. "That was my relationship with him."

Mr. Botstein said he first visited Epstein's townhouse in 2012 to thank him for unsolicited donations to Bard's high schools, then he returned over several years in an attempt to get more donations. In 2015, Epstein donated 66 laptops, the documents show.

"We looked him up, and he was a convicted felon for a sex crime," he said. Bard has a large program providing education to prisoners, he said. "We believe in rehabilitation."

Mr. Botstein, also the longtime music director for the American Symphony Orchestra, invited Epstein to an opera at Bard in 2013, then a concert at the college in 2016, the documents indicate. Epstein planned each time to bring some of his young female assistants and arrive by helicopter.

Leon Botstein, president of Bard College and music director for the American Symphony Orchestra, invited Epstein to events at the school.

Photo: Hiroyuki Ito/Getty Images

.

Mr. Botstein said he was expecting Epstein to support classical music causes and that the school took precautions when he visited. "Because of his previous record, we had security ready," he said. "He did not have any free access to anybody."

At Epstein's home, Mr. Botstein was led to a dining room where they discussed classical music and other causes, he said. "He presented himself as a billionaire, a really, really rich person," he said. "I found him odd and arrogant. And what I finally came to believe, which is why we stopped contact with him, is that he was simply stringing us along."

Despite all his meetings, Mr. Botstein said, Epstein never made another donation to Bard. "It was a blessing in disguise," he said, "that we never got any [more] money."

—Rob Barry contributed to this article.